

our bill will amend will in fact, by amending that law, save lives.

So I urge my colleagues, when this bill is brought to the floor, as I hope it will be in the next several weeks, to look at this bill, to pass it, and to move on so that we can make a very strong statement and do something very positive for America's children.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. CHAFEE addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island is recognized.

Mr. CHAFEE. Mr. President, I want to thank the distinguished Senator from Ohio very much for the work he has done on this legislation, the support he has given it, the kind things he has had to say about my part in it.

I think it is very important to stress that the Senator from Ohio has long been active in children's matters, particularly this area that we are involved with, namely, adoption and foster care. He knows the existing problems in this system and has been very, very helpful in the meetings we have had in putting this legislation together.

So I thank the Senator from Ohio very much for his work. And I share his enthusiasm and his desire to see this legislation come up this year, before we leave hopefully. So certainly both of us will do everything we can. We have had some fine meetings with the majority leader on it. Next week, we will be meeting with the chairman of the Finance Committee. Hopefully this legislation can come before us before we leave.

If there is nobody else desiring to speak, Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. FAIRCLOTH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(The remarks of Mr. FAIRCLOTH pertaining to the introduction of S. 1313 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. FAIRCLOTH. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. THOMAS). Without objection, it is so ordered.

LEGAL CUSTODY OF MEI MEI

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, I rise this morning to draw the attention of my colleagues to a very sad, unnecessary controversy involving the Government of the United States and the Government of China, a controversy which also involves a little 3-year-old girl.

Mr. President, this is the sad story. A Chinese woman living in Cleveland was diagnosed with schizophrenia. For many reasons, including this diagnosis, it was clear that this woman was not capable of taking care of her daughter. In fact, they had both been evicted from a Salvation Army shelter because of concerns that the mother was mistreating the daughter. Evidence showed that the child had been seriously neglected. So the court stepped in and sent this child into foster care. By the time this little girl was 16 months old, tragically, she has been in four foster homes.

The natural mother was allowed visiting rights. During one of these visits she abducted the child and took her to the People's Republic of China. In June 1997, Mr. President, the Ohio court permanently terminated the birth mother's rights and awarded legal custody of Mei Mei—this little girl's name—to Mei Mei's foster mother. Since last October, the foster mother, the legal guardian of this child, has been trying, naturally, to get Mei Mei back. She wants to adopt Mei Mei, but her efforts thus far have not been successful.

Mr. President, I urge President Clinton to raise the issue of this little child with the Chinese President when they meet. There is an adoptive family waiting in Ohio for Mei Mei. They love her and they will be able to take good care of her. I hope this problem can be resolved in a positive and expeditious way. Therefore, I urge the President to raise this at the highest level between our countries.

A few minutes ago on the floor I circulated a letter—and a number of my colleagues have already signed it—to send to President Clinton urging him to bring the matter up.

Mr. President, sometimes it is easy, as we debate issues, to lose the personal sense about these horrible cases. Sometimes we hear about statistics and sometimes we hear about stories of bad things occurring, such as I have just related.

To try to bring it home, though, and put a more personal face on it, let me read just one paragraph that was written by the foster mother who wants to adopt Mei Mei. This is what she writes:

We have been applauded for our dedication and uninterrupted love for Mei Mei. I can honestly tell you, however, that it was not difficult. When a child enters your life and needs to be held, you hold them. You teach them to laugh, you teach them that you are there, you teach them to be gentle, you teach them that everything in life is beautiful. And then when they start to see that life is not something to be just tolerated but rather to be enjoyed, they develop a sparkle in their eye, which fuels your love further for them. That's what happened with us and with Mei Mei.

So I urge, again, Mr. President, that our President, President Clinton, bring this matter up with the Chinese. It is a small matter, I suppose. But it is a little girl; it is her life. She has an opportunity for a loving family to raise her. She was snatched away from that op-

portunity by a woman who has clearly demonstrated that she is unfit to take care of this little girl. So I urge the President, as he discusses issues with the Chinese, to raise the issue of Mei Mei.

Mr. President, I yield the floor, and at this point I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

FDA REFORM

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, I want to discuss today an important issue involving the FDA. First, let me congratulate my colleague from Arkansas, Senator TIM HUTCHINSON, for his fine work on the legislation that he has just introduced. This bill that Senator HUTCHINSON has introduced would prevent the FDA from implementing a proposed rule that is harmful and unnecessary.

Mr. President, this is the story. Earlier this year, the Food and Drug Administration issued a proposed rule to accelerate the phaseout of metered-dose inhalers that are propelled by chlorofluorocarbon gases, commonly known as "CFC's." Essentially, Mr. President, the FDA has proposed to ban from the market safe and effective medicines that millions of Americans use to help them breathe. For many patients, these medicines mean, quite literally, the difference between life and death.

This FDA proposed ban is not based on concerns of safety, but rather the ban on these inhalers was put forward on the grounds that inhalers that use CFCs deplete the Earth's ozone layer. Now, the fact is, Mr. President, that these inhalers have only a minimal effect on ozone depletion. Asthma inhalers account for only a very small part of this problem. It is estimated that asthma inhalers account for less than 1.5 percent of the total problem.

Perhaps more important, Mr. President, the companies that make these inhalers have already agreed to develop new CFC-free devices by the year 2005—the deadline that was previously set forth in the international Montreal Protocol. These companies are working hard to bring these products to the market quickly and, in fact, they think they will beat the 2005 year deadline.

So I think, Mr. President, it's clear that the FDA's proposed rule to accelerate the phaseout of these products yields no significant benefit to the global environment. What it will do, however, is take away essential medications from Americans who depend on these inhalers to manage serious respiratory illnesses.

Mr. President, over 30 million Americans suffer from some type of respiratory disease, including asthma.